

Om! Gam! Ganapathaye! Namaha!
Om! Sri Raghavendraya Namaha!
Om! Namo! Bhagavathe! Vasudevaya!
Om! Ham! Hanumathe Sri Rama Doothaya Namaha!

YAGNOPAVEETHAM **PARAMAM PAVITHRAM**

! Yagnopaveetham paramam pavithram
Prajapatheryasahajam purasthad
Aayushyamagryam prathimuncha shubram
Yagnopaveetham balamasthu thejah!!

Above sloka (manthra) on Yagnopaveetham describes the sanctity, spirituality, and sacredness of Yagnopaveetham with its benefits. It says that Yagnopaveetham is "the best among those that purify, the one that has emerged along with the Brahma (Prajapathi) at the time of creation, that which bestows life and prominence, the one that is sacred, clean and unsoiled, and the one which confers on to the wearer both knowledge and power.

What is Yagnopaveetham?

Yagnopaveetham is the triple stranded sacrificial strand of thread joined by a knot called Brahmagranthi that is worn by those initiated into the Gayathri recital. Yagnopaveetham is a Sanskrit word. Yagna means the homa or sacred ritual and upaveetham means a covering. Yagnopaveetham means a sacred covering on the body without which a Yagna or a sacred ritual cannot be performed. It is called as Brahmasuthram. In Telugu it is called as Jandhyam, in Tamil it is called Poonal, while in Kannada it is called as Janivara. In English it is called as sacred thread. Yagno-pavita means 'thread of sacrifice' that symbolizes the sacrifice of ego, anger & selfishness.

Who should wear Yagnopaveetham?

In olden days both men and women used to wear Yagnopaveetham. But nowadays only men who are eligible and initiated into Gayathri Manthra wear it. Among the Varnas, Brahmin, Kshatriya, Vysya who is a dwija can wear Yagnopaveetham. They should start wearing from the day they are initiated into Gayathri Manthra which generally happens through a ceremony called Upanayanam.

How many Yagnopaveethas one should wear?

It is said that Brahmachari (unmarried person) should wear only one Yagnopaveetham that has three strands. A Grihastha (married person) should wear two such Yagnopaveethas. It is in practice to wear three Yagnopaveethas by a Grihastha, the third one that acts as an Uttareeyam (upper dhoti).

What should be the length of Yagnopaveetham?

When you wear it, the length of the Yagnopaveetham should come up to the navel level and it should be neither above nor below the navel. It is said that if it is below the navel it will lead to the loss of penance power and if it is above the navel it is Ayuksheenam (reduction in longevity).

How to wear it?

Yagnopaveetha dhaarana vidhi

- Face the East or North direction
- Perform Aachamanam
- Ganapathi dhyanam

**! Suklambaradharam Vishnum SasiVarnam ChathurBhujam,
Prasanna Vadanam Dhyayeth Sarva Vignopa Santhaye!!**

- Do Pranayamam

- **Sankalpam**

Evam guna Visheshana Visistayaam - Subha Thithau,

**Mama Shroutha smartha vidhi vihitha nithya karma sadachara
anushtana योग्यथासिद्धयर्थम् (Jaata/Mruthaasoucha janita
prayaschittartham) Brahma Tejobhivrudhyartham
Yagnopaveetha dharanam karishye**

- New Yagnopaveetham should be purified with water and turmeric powder
- Invoke the presiding Deities of Yagnopaveetham, Goddess Gayathri & Sun God

- **Yagnopaveetham Ithi manthrasya**

- Parabrahma Rishih(Touch forehead)
 - Trushtup chandah (touch below nose)
 - Paramathma devatha (touch the chest)
- Yagnopaveetha dhaarane viniyogah,
 - Wear Yagnopaveetham one by one reciting the following manthra. While wearing Yagnopaveetham it should be held by both hands, the knot in the Yagnopaveetham being held above by the right hand facing upwards.

Yagnopaveetha dharana Manthra

**! Yagnopaveetham paramam pavithram
Prajapatheryassahajam purasthath!
Aayushyamagryam prathimuncha shubram
Yagnopaveetham balamasthuthejah!!**

- In case of Brahmachari only one Yagnopaveetham is prescribed.
- Grihastha should wear a second one after reciting the sankalpa as, (**Mama Grihasthasrama Yogyatha Siddhyartham dwiteeya Yagnopaveetha dhaaranam karishye**) and reciting the above manthra.
- Similarly Grihastha should wear a third one with the sankalpa as, (**Mama Uttareeyartham**) and then recite once again the above manthra.
- Yagnopaveethams should be worn one by one as said above and every time Aachamanam should be performed and Gayathri should be recited.
- Remove the old Yagnopaveetham from below the navel by reciting the following sloka,

Yagnopaveetha Visarjana Manthra

**! Upaveetham Bhinna thanthum jeernam kasmala dooshitham,
Visrujaami jale Brahman varcho dheergayurasthu mey!**

(Old Yagnopaveetham should be dropped into water or on a Tree and should not be thrown into a garbage)

- Perform Aachamanam again.
- Recite Gayathri Manthra as per ones capacity (10/100/1000 #)

Posture of Yagnopaveetham

Generally we find three postures of wearing of Yagnopaveetham. One is Upavita where the yagnopavita is worn over the left shoulder and under the right arm. This posture is used for performing auspicious ceremonies and sacred rituals related to Gods. This is called Savya position. The second one is Praachinavita where, the Yagnopavita is worn above the right shoulder and under the left arm. This position is used while performing sacred rites to the Forefathers (Pitru Karya). This is called Apasavya position. When the yagnopavita is worn around the neck and over the chest in maalakara (like a garland) and is held with both thumbs in the region of the heart and above the naval, it is Nivita. This form is used during Rishi tarpana, sexual intercourse, answering nature called, carrying a corpse etc.

We would have observed Brahmins tie tightly their Yagnopaveetham to the right ear/left ear while attending nature calls. While it is to protect the sacred thread becoming soiled during the course of attending nature calls, there is also a health element involved in it. It is said that important nerves connecting the excretory system pass through right/left ear. When pressure is applied it helps in regulating the functioning of excretory organs perhaps the concept of Acupressure.

When to Change the Yagnopaveetham?

When once, a person starts wearing Yagnopaveetham generally it should not be removed and it should be worn always (24 hours and 365 days). It is like a woman wearing a Mangala Suthra for ever. But in practice it is not possible to wear the same Yagnopaveetham permanently. Due to wear and tear, it may get soiled or worn out or gets broken and needs to be changed. One should not wear a broken or worn out Yagnopaveetham. Apart from this it should be changed under the following circumstances.

- On the day of Upakarma that falls in Sravana Masam once in a year,
- Whenever there is Jataasoucham or Mruthaasoucham (birth/death in the family)
- Whenever one visits the Cremation Ground, or touches a Corpse,
- Whenever one happen to touch a woman during her monthly periods.

Whenever there is a need to change Yagnopaveetham it should not be removed recklessly. It should be changed first and then the worn out to be removed as per the laid down procedure.

Technicalities of Yagnopaveetham

Colour

As per the scripts it is said that the sacred thread should be white in colour for Brahmins, red in colour for Kshatriyas and yellow in colour for Vysyas. But in practice we find people using Yagnopaveetham which is white in colour.

Quality

As per the scripts it is said that the Yagnopaveetham should be made up of cotton for Brahmins, silk for Kshatriyas and linen for Vysyas. But in practice we find people using Yagnopaveethams made from cotton.

Composition

Yagnopaveetham Navathanthu Nirmitham. It is said that Yagnopaveetham is made up of nine layers of woven cotton thread spun by a virgin girl and twisted by a Brahmin reciting Gayathri manthra on an auspicious day. The length of the thread used for making Yagnopaveetham as per the scripts should be 96 breadths of four fingers measured by ones own hand. Thickness of the thread should be of a mustard seed size. Nowadays we don't find such observations being followed in the making of Yagnopaveethams.

Arithmetic of number "96"

It is said that Gayathri Manthra has 24 letters and when it is added together from four Vedas it becomes 96 (24×4) that gives the power or eligibility to the Dwija to perform Yagna or Yagas and to recite Gayathri Manthra. Four fingers represent the four states of the soul a man experiences from time to time (waking, dreaming, dreamless sleep, and absolute Brahmanhood)

There is another arithmetic to this number, that is human body comprises of 25 elements, made up of three Gunas (Satwa, Rajo, Tamo). We have 16 thithis in the calendar, 27 Stars in the Almanac, 4 Vedas, 6 Ruthus in three Seasons (summer, winter and monsoon), and 12 months. When all these are added together ($25+3+16+27+4+6+3+12$) it comes to 96. It is said that human life rotates around these elements.

Significance of Nine layers

It is said that nine layers represent nine devathas who are the presiding deities of Yagnopaveetham. They are Pranavam (Omkaara), Agni, Anantha (Naga); Moon (Soma), Pithru Devathas, Prajapathi, Vayu, Sun (Surya), and all other Devathas. It is said that before wearing the Yagnopaveetham one should offer prayer to all these nine deities.

Brahma Granthi

As per the scripts it is prescribed that the Yagnopaveetham should have knots equivalent to the number of Pravaras in one's Gothra. But in practice we find only one knot for the Yagnopaveetham. The knot with which the three strands are tied together is called Brahma Granthi that signifies the ParaBrahma (Pranavam) who is sakala Veda Swaroopa. There are many interpretations about the three strands of Yagnopaveetham.

It symbolizes the three trinal Lords (Brahma Vishnu, Maheswara) when tied together it becomes Para Brahma, three worlds (Bhu, Bhuvar, Suvar), three feminine energies (Lakshmi, Saraswathi and Durga), and three tatwas or qualities (Satwa, Rajo, Tamo). It is also interpreted as three strands representing Ida, Pingala and Sushumna nadi, through which the kundalini energy manifests as prana and consciousness. The three strands also indicate that one who wears it should have a triple control over his mind speech and body (thought, word and deed)

Dwija

Dwija mean twice born. There is no difference between one child and another at the time of birth. All are born out of the mother's womb only. This is the first stage of life (Shudra). The second stage is getting the upadesa of Gayathri at the time of Upanayanam, when the boy becomes a Dwija or twice-born. He is then purified. The third stage is Vipra, when one has mastered the study of the Vedas. The fourth stage is Brahmana when he actually realizes the Brahman through the knowledge of the Self. One becomes a Brahmana not by birth but only when one realizes the Supreme Brahman. One becomes a Brahmana by action and not by birth.

Why should one wear a Yagnopaveetham?

This would increase longevity of the person who wears, gives physical and mental strength through the worship of Sun God using Gayathri Mantra for which one would have been initiated during his Upanayanam. By wearing Yagnopaveetham one gets purified both externally and internally. By wearing one gets eligibility to perform spiritual and sacred rituals (Srutha/Smārtha Karmas) as prescribed in Vedas for his Varna. Sacred rituals performed by wearing Yagnopaveetham give good results.

Vinayagnopaveethenaa Bhojanam Kurthe Dwijam

Ajamoothrapureerskena Rethassevanamevacha

It is said that one should not attend to nature calls, eating food, participate in sensual pleasures without Yagnopaveetham. It is a prerequisite for learning Veda and also for marriage.

What is significance of wearing Yagnopaveetham?

The Vedic link that the child lost when the umbilical cord is cut is re-established in the form of Yagnopaveetham. In other words, Yagnopaveetham serves as an umbilical cord that connects him, not just his immediate parents, not just the three generations but the entire tree of generations and the Rishi on whose root the whole tree flourished. The three strands remind the wearer that he has to pay off the three debts (Rinas) he owes to the ancient seers, ancestors, and to the Gods (Rishi Rina, Pithru Rina, and Daiva Rina).

Yagnopaveetham is not a mere symbol to identify a community. One who wears a Yagnopaveetham may not necessarily be a Brahman and one who does not wear a Yagnopaveetham may not be a non-Brahmin either. Yagnopaveetham has the sanctity of its own and one has to qualify himself for wearing it, not by birth alone but also by practice. He alone is a Brahmin who does his Nithya Karmas, follows the path of Sanatana Dharma and remains free from ego, avarice, anger and pride.

What is the use of a Yagnopaveetham for the one whom the world knows as a Brahmin? Yagnopaveetham is not something that is worn for the world to know. It is for the realization of Brahman within. But one who has thrown away his Yagnopaveetham but has led a life of truth is nobler compared to the one who wears his Yagnopaveetham but does nothing to justify it. Yagnopaveetham is a passport to obtain Vedic education. Yagnopaveetham is the mark of formal entry into Brahminhood. It gives the power and authority to pursue his spiritual path.

Festival related to Yagnopaveetham

Every year in the month of Sravana Masam which generally comes in the month of August during rainy season on the Full Moon day a festival related to Yagnopaveetham is celebrated called Upakarma. Some times it could fall on a day prior to or after the Full Moon day. In Tamil it is called as Avani Avittam. It is not just simply a festival to celebrate and enjoy. It is an occasion to make us remember the significance of Yagnopaveetham and Gayathri Manthra that has been initiated at the time of Upanayanam and rededicate ourselves to the spiritual path. On this day all those who have been initiated into the concept of Upanayanam will change their Yagnopaveetham and wear a new one. For more details on Upakarma you may like to read a related article from the following link.....

<http://www.scribd.com/doc/17678372/UPAKARMA-SIGNIFICANCE>

Sri Krishnaarpanamasthu
bhargavasarma